

Rivington and Blackrod High School, Horwich, Lancashire

A short summary, Paul Lacey, 2005



Rivington & Blackrod HS^{[1](#)}

Rivington and Blackrod High School is a Specialist school which focuses on Design Technology, mathematics and science. It has also been awarded the status of a Training school to train the next generation of teachers. The lower school the former Horwich County Secondary School has the Year Seven students.

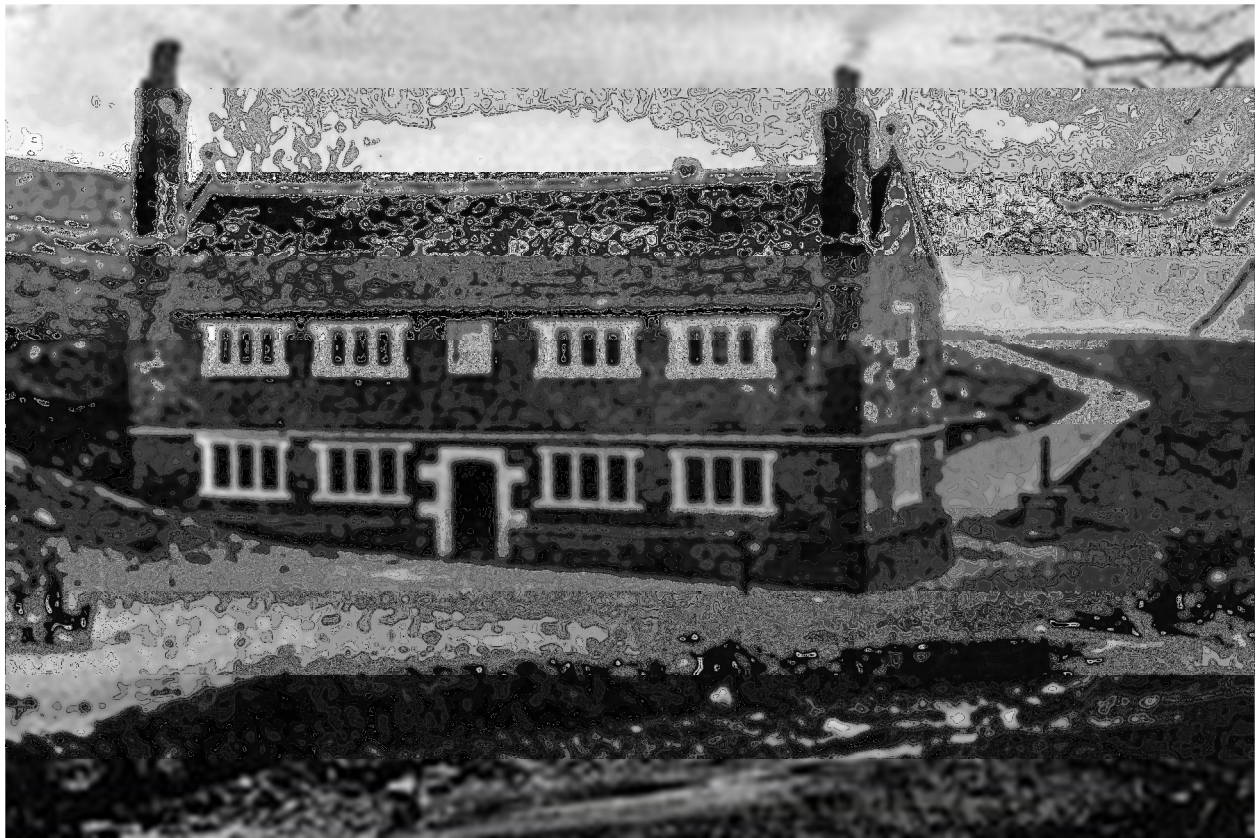
The upper school the current high school has the year Year Eight to Year Eleven and Sixth form college students.^{[2](#)} Rivington and Blackrod High School is an active educational establishment and in the interest of safety does not allow tourists in the school or within its grounds.

The Rivington school became amalgamated with Blackrod Grammar School in 1875 ³⁾ A new school was built seven years later on a different site using land connected to Rivington Grammar schools ⁴⁾ endowment of farm lands. The current school now known as Rivington & Blackrod Comprehensive High School is located off Rivington Lane, Horwich. The charter was approved by Queen Victoria ⁵⁾

The old Rivington grammar school in Rivington village is now an infants School. ⁶⁾

History

The history of events leading to the foundation of the Rivington Free Grammar School and Rivington Protestant Church find their routes in the early pre reformation days of England. Events most certainly turned with Luther and his use of the Printing Press to communicate new idea's regarding religion. Those idea's were adopted by Princes all over Europe and the Church of Rome was looted, many people met their deaths. These were the earlier days of the Bishop's life.



Old Grammar School c.1900 ⁷⁾



Pilkington Picture⁸⁾ [with transcript](#)



School House, on far right, former Post Office left, now private.⁹⁾

Free Grammar School

The Rivington school was created as the Free Grammar school of Queen Elizabeth In Rovington,^{[10\)](#)} and was at first located in the English village now known as Rivington. The founder of Rivington School was [James Pilkington \(1518–1576\)](#).

The charter of foundation by Royal Patent^{[11\)](#)} of Elizabeth I dates to 1566. A separate page is located on this site with the full transcript of the [Founding Charter 1566](#). The Bishops family motto was '*Virtue lives after death*'. Rivington Grammar School was founded for the children of ordinary locals.^{[12\)](#)}

At Rivington the first schoolmaster was appointed on the 10th July 1572. The first Governors, George Pilkington being one of the first appointed, appear to have begun their duties in August 1574. A month later Bishop James Pilkinton confirmed the endowments to them and their successors.

The list of first scholars, a total of 114 pupils is dated 1575. The school commenced teaching nine years after the founding charter.

The original building at Rivington Village, rebuilt 1714 has continued to remain in use as an infants school. Its date stone is carved with the initials of its Governors in 1714, William Breres, Alexander Waddington, John Morris, James Anderton, Thomas Bromiley, and Richard Brownlow.

In 1789 a house for the Master was built near the School on a piece of land known as the Goosehey, adjoining Mill Hill, a portion of which had already been occupied by the Unitarian Chapel.

The Rivington school became amalgamated with Blackrod Grammar School in 1875 ^{[13\)](#)}

The House System

A tradition from the early 20th century is the division of Pupils into Houses who's names reflect the founders Pilkington, Holmes (Pilkington founded Rivington and Homes founded Blackrod) and Queens.

The Houses compete in sports for Trophies and the House Challenge Shield started in 1910 bearing the Bishops Mitre and school motto. The Shield itself was filled and now has a plaque with the names of later winners of the award.

Rivington Founding Endowments

In the Rivington schools earliest days no formal arrangement existed for the land on which the original grammar school now sits, until an endowment of a one thousand year lease granted from 21st March 23rd year of Elizabeth c.1581, by George Pilkington, the Bishops brother.

Most of the property owned by the Original Grammar School in the early period was within the diocese of Durham and provided by the founder, James Pilkington, Bishop of Durham. The schools initial properties were in Lindake, Wolsingham, Wickham, Heighington, Stanhope, Stockton, Auckland, Silksworth, and Hetton-Le-Hole bringing income to the school of £30 per year from rents.^{[14\)](#)}

By an Act of Parliament lands in Durham were exchanged for lands locally. The local lands included an annual rent received from [Higher Knowles and Lower Knowles](#) and Grut Farms in Rivington, and a house known as Jolly's in Heath Charnock. Further lands were also donated to or bought by the School.

On 3rd May 1919 the school sold off properties in Chorley and Wheelton; these were Flash Green Farm, 36 acres, Spout Fold Farm, 23 acres, Wheelton Lodge Farm 21 acres and two cottages, Wheelton House Farm, 45 acres and the Rosebud Inn.^{[15\)](#)}

Rivington & Blackrod

Rivington & Blackrod Grammar School, now the High School, was built on the current site in 1882 with provision for about fifty boys and perhaps an equal number of day boys. The level pitch at the front was created between 1883 and 1884, at a cost of £210 raised by a Bazaar.



Current High School (Map 1904)^{[16\)](#)}

The Rivington & Blackrod School Chapel

The Dantzig Oak panelled chapel was built in 1892 to accommodate around 100 by a donation from Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Marshall, in memory of their son Frederick. The Chapel was designed by Mr. R. K. Freeman. The Anglican School Chapel is to the left of the school and has regular morning worship. The original Chapel referred to within the founding charter is Rivington Church and the Grammar School, now the infant school. The Rivington and Blackrod High School is located at the Lancashire side of the Horwich and Rivington boundary. A boundary that has become the River Douglas, the river's course has changed, The Platt of Horwich drawn by William Senior Professor of Mathematics

1620 indicates the original course. (BCL) The original boundary was Pearlbrook River according to this map.

The Pilkington Window

In the East Window is a stained glass window installed in 1912 that commemorates James Pilkington, Bishop of Durham and donors to the Chapel. The side lights illustrate for events in the career of the Bishop, on the left his Mastership of St John's College, Cambridge under which is a depiction of the Bishop taking his ship to Europe. The top right picture depicts him teaching protestant children in Zurich, and the bottom right he is depicted revising the Book of Common Prayer with Matthew Parker, the then Archbishop of Canterbury.

In the 18th century Richard Pilkington, a leading figure in Horwich and Rivington was for many years a school governor, his sons went on to form Pilkington Glass.^{[17](#)}

William Lever, 1st Viscount Leverhulme, founder of Lever Brothers was a School Governor between 1901 and 1905 and also amongst others contributed toward the Chapel Windows installed in 1912.

Belgium refugees attended the school soon after the outbreak of the Great War.

The War Memorial Window



War Memorial Window, ^{[18](#)}

To the west is a window memorial to those killed in the Great War 1914 to 1918. Dedicated by Henry Henn, Bishop of Burnley on 11th March 1922^{[19](#)}.Chorley Guardian, 11th Mar 1922)). The west window was unveiled on the 8th March 1922 by R. T. Johnson, a past headmaster between 1894 and 1904. The window is of three lights, the laurel crowned figure representing Victory, on the left is a Knight in full armour, depicting faith, while central is three Mary's kneeling before the Angel at the tomb of the risen Christ.

The inscription reads in Latin and translates to English as 'They Sought Glory of Liberty ; they see the Glory of God' also inscribed are the names of 24 of the Schools War Dead. (Over 150 fought in WW1)

Both Windows were produced by Messrs John. Hardman & Co. Ltd. The windows were restored and cleaned by Andrew Seddon of Classical Glass, Bolton, in 2004. Two additional windows were also installed at the chapel in 2004. One was in memory of Mr. Jenner a former head master and the second to celebrate the Association of Old Rivingtonians centenary in 1904 to 2004.

Great War Roll of Honour		
W. Leonard Billington	Ernest Cotton	John S. Griffiths
Geoffrey R. Johnson	Richard Nelson	Richard Denham Scholfield
Harold Briggs	Arthur Chippendale	Charles Grundy
Henry Norman Johnson	Harvey St George James Pulford	Harry Tatlow
Frederick H. Brown	John Entwistle	John Ellis Harvery
Richard Miller	J. Alec Ross	Denham Walker
Joseph O. Carter	Leonard W. Gastall	Ralph Hough
Norman Myers	Frank Savage	Percy Wilkinson

NB: Corrections were made to the above roll on 02/03/2014 after receiving details of research from Mary James after visual inspection of the window.

World War II Roll of Honour

After the end of the second world war old pupils placed a memorial book in the school chapel bearing the names of those of their number who lost their lives, this reads as follows:

Roll of Honour to those who laid down their lives in the war, 1939-1945.

World War II Roll of Honour		
Richard Cecil Butterworth	Maurice Donkersley	Edward Rawlinson
Frederick Arthur Easthope	Eric Harper	Arthur Settle
John Lawrence Ellison	Fred James	Fred Taylor
Ted Atherton	Ian Lamb	Owen Worrall
Tony Atherton	Arthur Lee	William Wallace Ryder
Derek Booth	Norman Owen	Charles Philip Singleton
John P. Dickinson		

Earl of Derby opens Assembly Hall

The Assembly Hall was inaugurated by Lord Stanley, Edward George Villiers Stanley, in 1905, the same year as girls were first admitted. After decline in the numbers of Scholars between 1904 and 1905 a meeting handed control to the Local Authority under the powers of the Education Act 1902 giving the authority responsibility for secondary education. With Sir Henry Flemming Hibbert the Chairman of the Lancashire Education Authority backing the schools future the school underwent alterations and became a local day school. The new scheme was formally inaugurated by Lord Stanley and the new building opened by Frederick Stanley, 16th Earl of Derby. Taking in 100 more day pupils including equal numbers of Girls. Around this time the curriculum added modern studies.

Cricket

The Cricket Pitch was laid and drained in 1907, by a bequest in memory of T. Heaton of £100 made by his Grandson Mr. William Heaton of Lostock. Rev. W. Ritson, Vicar of Rivington met much of the additional cost, along with providing the Coat of Arms. (Rev Ritson died in the Headmasters Study) Traditionally the School Bell was not rung whilst a good game of Cricket was being played. The grounds were in the past maintained by the scholars.

School Coat of Arms



Original Arms of School^{[20](#)}

The Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School badge features the Pilkington family coat of arms taken from the Pilkington picture from the left panel. The badge is a Pilkington cross with a crescent and is worn by pupils on the school uniform.

The design of the school coat of arms was introduced in 1907 by Rev. W. Ritson, Vicar of Rivington. The design is based on one of the alter pieces at the Rivington Church, the Pilkington Picture, a memorial to the Pilkington family of Rivington in the Elizabethan period.

The [Pilkington Painting](#) is thought to have been presented to the Church in the lifetime of James Pilkington, the founder of the school. The original was destroyed by fire in 1834. An amateur copy had been made in 1821 by Ann Pilkington and from that other copies were made. It was recorded at the time the original had greatly darkened with age.

At Lancaster Castle the Pilkington Cross is displayed within the Heraldry Shields of the High Sheriffs of Lancashire. The cross is within the seal of 1290 of Alexander Pilkington of Pilkington (b.1225 to d.1291) The Seal of Sir Roger Pylkynton displays the cross with a Squirrel above on an Indenture of 1306. The Mower first appeared on the Pilkington family arms in 1290, it is the emblem of the Rivington branch.

The arms at the left of the school coat of arms are the arms of the see of Durham. The arms to its right are the arms of James Pilkington, Bishop of Durham, with a crescent denoting a second son, the arms have at the top a man & scythe crest of the Rivington Pilkington family.^{[21](#)}



Arms

The original arms of James Pilkington granted by Sir Gilbert Dethick, Garter 1551 were an Argent a cross patonce voided gules, on a chief vert three suns. There was no crescent as appears in the painting.

School Badge



Window in Chapel of school 2004^{[22\]](#)}

The school badge as illustrated on the old Rivingtonians window is the Pilkington Cross with the emblem on top that is now a crown, the crescent moon has been retained that indicates James Pilkington was a second son.

Extension Opened

By 1924 a school inspection showed a need to expand the building. Work started in April 1929 the extension foundation stone was laid 12th July 1929 by Alderman Ernest Ashton, Mayor of Chorley who had been governor for many years.^{[23\)](#)} the extension at the back was to accommodate 300 pupils and required a long corridor to be built between the two buildings. The alterations added new science rooms, general classrooms. The Earl of Derby is noted as visiting in 1931.

A visitor in 1931 was the Earl of Derby, Edward George Villiers Stanley (1865-1948) who married Alice Montagu daughter of William Drogo Montagu, 7th Duke of Manchester.^{[24\)](#)}

Extensions were built on to the school, and in 1958 the Headmaster's house was converted into classrooms.^{[25\)](#) [26\)](#)}

Wallasey Grammer Arrives

A World War II evacuation in 1941 led to the arrival of the entire Wallasey Grammar School staying at Rivington & Blackrod Grammar School, as David Owen a former pupil of Rivington Grammar School recalls '*Wallasey Grammer brought a new meaning to class war*'. David Owen also recalls it was Wallasey Grammar School that introduced his former school to Rugby Union.^{[27\)](#)}

[Old Wallaseyans](#) have produced a DVD documentary of Wallasey Grammar School between 1938 and 1970 that can be obtained by writing to Bob Bryans at Hillside, Mill Hill, Keysoe, Bedford MK44 2HP price £12.

End of Rivington & Blackrod Grammar School

In 1973, Rivington & Blackrod High School was established by an amalgamation of Rivington & Blackrod Grammar School and Horwich County Secondary School, this ended the days of the grammar school. In 2004, the Brook Learning Partnership was formed - a collaborative partnership with Ladybridge High School, Bolton.

Bibliography

- * The History of Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School
- * A short History of Rivington, Wm Fergusson Irvine, 1904

External links

- [Rivington and Blackrod High School website](#)
- [Old Wallaseyans](#)

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²⁴⁾ History of Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School, M.M Kay

²⁵⁾ [Rivington & Blackrod High School's history](#)

²⁶⁾ Rivington, Lancashire, M.D Smith, 1989 Isbn 0-9508772-8-X

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